

IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION WATER AND SANITATION

Iraq's operating capacity for its 140 major water treatment facilities was 3 billion liters a day before the war. Today, facilities operate at about 65% of that level, primarily due to neglect, electricity shortages and post-war looting of plant and emergency generators. USAID's goal is to improve the efficiency and reliability of existing treatment facilities, especially those located south where water quantity and quality are particularly low. Iraq has 13 major wastewater facilities. Baghdad's three wastewater treatment facilities—which together comprise three-quarters of the nation's sewage treatment capacity—are inoperable and raw waste flows directly into the Tigris River. When rehabilitation work is completed all three plants will move from zero to secondary treatment. In the rest of the country, most wastewater treatment facilities were only partly operational prior to the conflict, and shortages of electricity, parts, and chemicals have exacerbated the situation. Only a few wastewater treatment plants are presently fully operational in Iraq. Water that is pumped through the system is largely non-potable, especially in the south.

Accomplishments

- USAID-supported water and sanitation projects will benefit over 14.5 million Iraqis.
- Repaired over 1,700 critical breaks in Baghdad's water network, which increased water flow by 200,000 m³ a day.
- Began expanding Baghdad's Saba Nissan water plant, which will add 225,000 m³ a day to the water supply by May.
- Began rehabilitation of 70 of Baghdad's 90 non-functioning waste pumping stations.
- Began restoring Iraq's largest wastewater treatment facility, Rustimiyah.
- Begun rehabilitating Al Basrah's Sweet Water Canal, currently running at less than half capacity. Project will renovate the entire system—the canal, reservoirs, and water treatment plants—and restore operation to full capacity.
- Renovating Safwan water pumping station, on schedule to be completed in early November.
- Rehabilitating An Najaf and Al Hillah sewage treatment plants to serve 194,000 Iraqis.
- Installing generators at 37 Baghdad water facilities and pumping stations to ensure continuous water supply.

Next Steps

- Implement plans at Baghdad's Saba Nissan water plant to increase potable water flow to east Baghdad by 45 percent, benefiting 2.5 million people.
- Restore six large-scale sewage treatment plants and the Baghdad citywide pump station, which serves over 5.5 million people.
- Rehabilitate eight water treatment and pump stations around Al Basrah.
- Rehabilitate An Nasiriyah Water and Sanitation Department building, water units in Maysan governorate, Kirkuk water testing facility; and sanitation works in Al Basrah.
- Support efforts to monitor water quality in Kharkh Directorate of Baghdad.

Issues

- Significant investment required to address deferred maintenance and lack of spare parts.
- A revenue stream or defined subsidy is necessary to cover recurrent costs, including water treatment chemicals.